

Message Text

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42

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 AGR-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 L-03 IO-14 STR-08 EUR-25

DRC-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 AID-20 TRSE-00 H-03 SS-20

NSC-10 /190 W

----- 124316

R 311258Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5729

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1364

PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR TD XL

SUBJECT: OPENING OF CCFA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

1). THE CARIBBEAN CANE FARMERS' ASSOCIATION OPENED ITS 12TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PORT OF SPAIN ON OCTOBER 30. PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, S. NORMAN GIRWAR REVIEWED THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY TO MEMBERS ATTENDING FROM BARBADOS, GUYANA, JAMAICA, BELIZE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND OTHER CARIBBEAN PRODUCERS. SEVERE DROUGHT FOR TWO YEARS, SHORTAGE OF LABOR, HIGH PRODUCTION COSTS, UNAUTHORIZED CANE FIRES AND UNDER CAPITALIZATION WERE CITED AS PROBLEMS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, AND FORCES FROM OUTSIDE THE INDUSTRY, NAMELY THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EEC FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SUGAR AGREEMENT, THE REDUCED U.S. QUOTA AND THE CUT IN QUOTA UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT, WERE ALL CITED IN PAINTING A GLOOMY PICTURE OF THE INDUSTRY'S CURRENT POSITION.

2). T&T MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE L.M. ROBINSON FORMALLY OPENED
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THE MEETING AND SUGGESTED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE PROBLEMS

CITED BY MR. GIRWAR, HE WISHED THE CONFERENCE TO ALSO CONSIDER IMPROVED MANAGEMENT IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY AND COME UP WITH LONG TERM CONSIDERATIONS RATHER THAN TEMPORARY SOLUTIONS.

3). SIR ROBERT KIRKWOOD, CHAIRMAN OF THE WEST INDIES SUGAR ASSOCIATION GAVE THE FINAL ADDRESS OF THE MORNING, SPEAKING WITHOUT PREPARED NOTES BUT RATHER COMMENTING ON POINTS RAISED BY THE PREVIOUS SPEAKERS.

4). AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, SOME TIME WAS DEVOTED BY EACH SPEAKER TO THE RECENT CUT IN THE U.S. QUOTA FOR WEST INDIES SUGAR. PERTINENT REMARKS WERE:

GIRWAR INDICATED THIS WAS A LEGAL MATTER AS A RESULT OF SERIOUS SHORTFALLS FROM THE WEST INDIES IN 1972 AND 1973 WHILE THE WEST INDIES CONTINUED TO SHIP SUGAR TO THE U.S. UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH SUGAR AGREEMENT. THERE ARE STILL REPRESENTATIONS BEING MADE AND HE HOPED A HIGHER QUOTA THAN 23,000 TONS WOULD RESULT. HE INDICATED THAT SOME QUOTE PSEUDO INTELLECTUALS UNQUOTE AND TWO LEADING FIGURES IN THE AREA (NO DOUBT PRIME MINISTERS ERIC WILLIAMS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND ERROI BARROW OF BARBADOS) WERE WRONG TO PUBLICLY CALL SUGAR A DEAD DUCK AT A TIME WHEN QUOTA NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS. MINISTER ROBINSON STATED THAT IT WOULD BE QUOTE IMPRUDENT TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT AS TO THE OUTCOME OF CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS TO EXPAND THE 1974 WEST INDIES QUOTA IN THE UNITED STATES UNQUOTE. NEVERTHELESS, HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ALTHOUGH THE U.S. DECISIONS WAS BASED ON THE LETTER OF THE LAW, SUGAR WAS SOLD TO OTHER COUNTRIES BASED ON CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS OF WHICH THE UNITED STATES WAS AWARE. IN THE CASE OF TRINIDAD PARTICULARLY, THE QUOTA CUT COMES AT A TIME WHEN A WORLD BANK LOAN IS BEING USED TO IMPROVE THE SUGAR INDUSTRY.

5). SIR ROBERT KIRKWOOD STATED THAT THE U.S. ACTION WAS QUOTE NOT DONE IN ANGER BUT ACCORDING TO LAW UNQUOTE AND AS A RESULT, REPRESENTATIONS BEING MADE IN WASHINGTON BY WISA AND THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS QUOTE WILL SECURE A QUOTA FOR 1974 SUFFICIENT TO COVER SHIPMENTS. WE HAVE FRIENDS IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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UNITED STATES WHO RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE A STRATEGIC AREA TO THE. UNQUOTE. HE FURTHER INDICATED THAT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS IN FEBRUARY WILL DETERMINE HOW MUCH SUGAR THE WEST INDIES CAN SHIP FROM JANUARY 1, 1975 ONWARD AND IT IS THEN THAT THE WEST INDIES CAN SUCCEED IN RETAINING THEIR QUOTA.

COMMENT

6). THE ONE OF THE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN SET TO ENCOURAGE CANE FARMERS OF THE CARIBBEAN TO PRODUCE MORE SUGAR AND TO COUNTERACT SOME PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT SUGAR IS A DEAD DUCK. THIS IS ALSO THE FIRST PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT LOSSES DUE TO TWO YEARS OF DROUGHT WILL NOT BE OVERCOME QUICKLY AND THAT THE INDUSTRY WILL NOT BE BACK TO FORMER PRODUCTION LEVELS UNTIL 1975. REGARDING THE CUT IN THE U.S. QUOTA IN 1974, AT NO TIME WAS ANY REFERENCE MADE TO THIS BEING RELATED TO RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN.
MARSHALL

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